



News Release

**US Army Corps
of Engineers**
Kansas City District

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For immediate release

Army Corps of Engineers offers water safety tips

KANSAS CITY, Mo. – The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers urges recreation seekers to follow safety tips while enjoying water-based activities over the Memorial Day weekend and the summer to lower the risk of accidental death.

Drowning is the Nation's second leading cause of accidental death even though it is possible to reduce drowning deaths by wearing a lifejacket. Approximately 700 recreational boaters die each year due to boating mishaps.

"More than 125,000 boaters are expected to flock to our lakes this Memorial Day weekend, and we want to ensure everyone's visit is enjoyable and safe," said, Col Michael Rossi, commander, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Kansas City District. "The best way for everyone to enjoy this holiday season is to not drink and boat and to remember life jackets before heading out on the water."

Statistics show that 96 percent of those who drown at Corps lakes may have survived if they had been wearing a lifejacket, and more than half of the incidents involved alcohol.

Each year, approximately 6,000 people drown in the United States. Drowning is the **SECOND** leading cause of accidental deaths for persons 15-44 years of age. What is really surprising is that two-thirds of the people who drown never had an intention of being in the water!

Did you know ---

Divers

Never dive into lakes and rivers...the results can be tragic. Every year, diving accidents result in more than 8,000 people suffering paralyzing spinal cord injuries and another 5,000 dying before they reach the hospital. All too often, hidden dangers lurk beneath the surface of the water, including rock outcrops or shallow water.

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Watch Small Children

Each year about 200 children drown and several thousand others are treated in hospitals for submersion accidents, accidents which leave children with permanent brain damage and respiratory health problems.

Remember, it only takes a few seconds for a small child to wander away. Children have a natural curiosity and attraction to water.

Alcohol- The Fun Killer

It's a fact, alcohol and water do not mix! Unfortunately, many people ignore this and each year about 3,000 of them are wrong...dead wrong! More than half of all the people that drown had consumed alcohol prior to their accident.

Being intoxicated is not necessary for alcohol to be a threat to your safety. Just one beer will impair your balance, vision, judgment and reaction time, thus making you a potential danger to yourself and others.

Research shows that four hours of boating, exposure to noise, vibration, sun, glare and wind produces fatigue that makes you act as if you were legally intoxicated. If you combine alcohol consumption with this boating fatigue condition, it intensifies the effects and increases your accident risk.

So remember, don't include alcohol in your outing, if you planning to have fun in, on, or near the water.

Keep these tips and facts in mind and have a safe Memorial Day weekend! For more information, contact Alicia Embrey at (816) 983-3487 or visit the water safety site at <http://watersafety.usace.army.mil/>.